

Determinants of Women's Economic Empowerment in Selected Arab Countries for the Period (2000-2018)

Dr. Dina Ahmed Omar

Assistant Professor, Technical Institute, Northern Technical University, Nineveh, Iraq.

E-mail: dinaao@ntu.edu.iq

Dr. Zakariya Hassan Hussein Abu Dames

Researcher in Political Affairs, Jordan.

E-mail: zak_abudames@yahoo.com

Received March 09, 2021; Accepted June 24, 2021

ISSN: 1735-188X

DOI: 10.14704/WEB/V18SI04/WEB18124

Abstract

This study examines the determinants of economic empowerment of women in selected Arab countries (Iraq, Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the Arab Republic of Egypt and Algeria) during the period (2000-2018), using the usual small squares method, and in this study we reviewed the concept and the economic determinants that affect empowerment Women, which in turn affect all other variables in these countries, the most important of which are the political and social aspects. In order to know the specific factors for women's economic empowerment, the study adopted the quantitative method to estimate these factors which are (the ratio of women's enrollment in secondary education to males, average life expectancy at birth for males and females, fertility rate, per capita GDP).

The results of the study found that the most important factors affecting the economic empowerment of women in most Arab countries are health, the proportion of women's enrollment in secondary education to males, average life expectancy at birth for males and females, per capita gross domestic product that had a significant and positive impact, while the fertility rate was found. It appeared morally and negatively.

Keywords

Determinants, Economic Empowerment of Women, "Selected Arab Countries".

Introduction

The economic empowerment of women is necessary to achieve economic development and growth on the basis of equity and sustainability. Although significant progress has been made in many aspects of women's economic empowerment through education and

employment, gender inequality remains entrenched as a result of discriminatory rules and practices. Even when women and men have equal opportunities, the results may be different. Promoting gender equality in education and health, for example, does not necessarily lead to equal outcomes for women and men in the labor market.

She considered that the participation of women in the labor market is of fundamental importance for their economic empowerment. During recent years, women's access to the labor market has increased, but there are persistent concerns about low wages and threatened employment, including lack of job stability and lack of social protection. Wages and occupational segregation persist, and women are more often represented in part-time jobs.

The problem of the study: Despite the great progress in large aspects in the fields of empowering women, especially in the aspects of education and health, there is still a need for a comprehensive approach to the economic empowerment of women. Hence, this study tries to answer the following questions:

1. What are the determinants of women's economic empowerment in the Arab countries?
2. Are there significant differences between Arab countries according to specific criteria - regarding the empowerment of women?

Study objective: The study aims to measure and analyze the factors that limit the economic empowerment of women in the Arab countries.

Hypothesis of the study: The study relies on the hypothesis that there are a set of determinants that affect in a moral, positive or non-significant and negative way the economic empowerment of women in the Arab countries.

Study methodology: In an effort to test the hypothesis of the study, an applied study was conducted using descriptive and quantitative analysis according to the experimental method, where consistent data were obtained for six Arab countries for which data were available (Iraq, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Arab Republic of Egypt and Algeria) for the period (2000 - 2018) The usual least squares method was used.

The importance of the study stems from the increasing interest in recent decades in the issue of empowering women and its occupation of an important place in theoretical and experimental studies and research.

The Concept of Empowering Women

In the 1980s, the concept of Empowerment Women appeared and became one of the pivotal concepts in gender studies. The World Bank considered empowering women to be one of the basic elements in the development process and combating poverty, and issued a report saying that empowering women is a development goal for two reasons:

1. Because achieving social justice is a goal in itself.
2. because empowering women is the means to achieve other goals, such as fighting poverty.

Many definitions have been developed for the concept of empowering women, all of which revolve around the same idea, which is empowering women to make decisions, and influencing the course of important matters for them, as empowerment here means supporting the potential of women and their ability to influence social institutions that are rewarded in their lives and support for control. In her life and in the available resources.

The empowerment of women and the improvement of their status are two important goals in themselves, which are necessary to achieve sustainable development, achieve equality and equity between men and women and enable them to achieve their full potential, and fully involve them in policy-making and decision-making processes, and in all aspects of economic, political and cultural life as a decision-maker, and the participation of Beneficiaries, and that all women receive the necessary education to meet their basic and human needs and exercise their human rights, and to establish mechanisms to ensure equal participation and fair representation of women at all levels of the political process, public life and skills development (Shangar, Daly, 2015, Bakhtiari et al, 2019).

The Concept of Women's Economic Empowerment

The economic empowerment of women means that the relative distribution of men and women in administrative, organizational and professional positions, earned income, and wages (United Nations, 2011) and advocates for this type of empowerment of women stress that women's economic empowerment is not achieved unless they have an income. Regular special (Malhotra, 2011). Feminist movement has produced a new term called the feminization of poverty, which means that women have a rate and rate of poverty much higher than that of men, and the reason for this is that women often do unpaid work. Wages, such as raising her children and doing household chores, while most men are engaged in paid work, making money concentrated in the hands of men and not of women

(Todaro, 2003). In this model, which constitutes the majority, women need to take permission from Her husband in all her affairs, and this matter is clearly evident in the model of the family in which the man takes charge of earning a living, and in which the woman manages the affairs of the house, and the woman also needs to ask her husband's permission to go out to work, or to change work, as she does not fully control her fertility (172012 (Kundu)).

In the 2015 Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum, 2015), the gender gap in the economic empowerment index is measured by the main index of participation, or economic opportunities that fall under the participation in the workforce, equal wages for the same work, income received, legislators and managers. Senior employees, and skilled workers (World Bank, 2006).

It also defined women's economic empowerment: as the relative distribution of men and women in administrative and organizational positions, the relative distribution of income gained by the economically active population of both sexes and the relative wages of females compared to males (Al-Munawer, 2017).

Economic empowerment has also been defined as focusing on factors that help women succeed and progress in the market, which includes increasing skills and access to productive resources, improving enabling and institutional environments, and assisting women in their ability to work and make decisions in order to benefit from economic growth and development (Note, 2013).

Previous Experimental Studies

1. The study of the United Nations Development Program in Iraq (2011) This study describes the challenges and opportunities for women to work in the Iraqi economy, and this study was a case drawn from economic empowerment initiatives throughout Iraq in order to shed more light on these issues. Recommendations on how to improve women's participation in the Iraqi economy.
2. The Arab Women Organization study (2017) This study is aimed at the Arab region; With a view to informing stakeholders, especially policy and decision makers; On the international sustainable development agenda in general, with a primary focus on highlighting the position of the issue of gender equality within it, shedding light on the status of women within both the realities and policies of development in the Arab region, and identifying the gaps in gender equality in the region; With regard to all development goals, and contributing to narrowing these gaps; By presenting successful

Arab and international experiences that can be guided by, and direct recommendations on Comprehensive and efficient inclusion of women in sustainable development. By achieving this, the study seeks to be a guiding document for Arab governments, decision-makers, and other relevant partners represented by civil society organizations, regional and international organizations, and donor agencies (on the inclusion of gender equality in all domestic policies pursued to achieve development goals).

3. The study (Note, 2013) aims to improve the treatment of women's economic empowerment in strategies at the departmental and program level. Identify and design appropriate economic empowerment initiatives for them in Canada at the international level and in development aid.
4. The report on Women in the Kingdom of Morocco (2017) reviews the most important steps taken by the Kingdom of Morocco in the path of empowering them and among its priorities is to empower them economically, as a fundamental determinant to reduce the vulnerability of their conditions and an important entry point to embody de facto equality, and the most important challenges that were faced to value their contribution to the economy, and mechanisms to reduce The differences between her and men in the economic construction sites, where Moroccan women were, and still are, at the heart of the reform dynamics, and at the core of the economic mobility and construction that the country is witnessing, and their contribution alongside men, as well as the promising future prospects.
5. The study (Shamlawi, Al-Heit, 2019) aimed at estimating the determinants of the Turkmen empowerment of women in the Arab countries, and the extent of their difference according to income levels, and by building a standard model for estimating - based on the global gender gap reports during the years (2006-2015), the Empowerment Index. Cumulative, the impact of economic empowerment, educational empowerment, political empowerment, and health empowerment on the cumulative empowerment of women was monitored at the level of all countries, high-income countries, high-middle-income countries, and low-middle-income countries. The study concluded with some recommendations to enhance the empowerment of Arab women, especially in the economic and political fields.

Data Sources and Time Period

The World Bank publications were relied upon to obtain data appropriate to the variables used in the research, which includes many Arab countries whose data are available in the issuance of international organizations and bodies, where consistent data were obtained (Iraq, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the Arab Republic of Egypt and Algeria) For the period (2000-2018) the usual least squares method was used.

Description of the Used Model

A model was adopted to measure the most important determinants affecting women's economic empowerment.

$$ECO = a_0 + a_1HE + a_2EDU + a_3FE + a_4GDP \dots (1-1)$$

ECO Economic Empowerment
HE Health indicator
EDU Education Index
FE Fertility rate

Average GDP Per Capita

In building the model, the type of tests and the methodology used to determine the relationships between the model variables, it was based on economic theory, in addition to previous reference studies on the subject of our research.

Research Variables: The Search Variables Included

1. The dependent variable: It is the Women's Economic Empowerment Index (ECO) measured as a percentage to bridge the economic gender gap between males and females, by taking the weighted average of the sub-indicators that fall within three gaps, which are:
 - The first gap: the participation gap, which represents the difference between the rate of participation of women and men in the workforce as a percentage of the total population, by which we mean measuring the participation rate of the total workforce for ages between the ages of (18) 64 - whether they are actually working, or looking for work, Noting that these numbers do not include citizens who work outside their country, and the number has been converted into a percentage by dividing the number of females by the number of males as used in the gender gap report.

The Second Gap: The Wage Gap, Measured By:

Equality in wages for similar work was calculated using a survey conducted by the World Economic Forum, by means of an opinion poll, and the distribution of questionnaires to individuals from all countries, and the source of data for this variable was monitored by answering.

To the question "In your country, to what extent are women's wages equal to men for similar work" and the expected answer was between 1 and 7 (1 = women's wages are

much lower and 7 = completely equal), the data were converted into a percentage using the ratio of women to men in% As in all report data.

- Estimated income: the percentage of income earned by a woman divided by the income obtained by a man. Per capita income was calculated: (%) using the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) 's Human Development Report 2007 methodology. 2008 and the data that were used to calculate this indicator include: gross domestic product, labor force contribution percentage, average monthly returns to a worker in economic activity Except for the agricultural sector.

The third gap: the progress gap between women and men, measured by:

Legislative directors, senior officials, the ratio of women to men.

- Skilled workers, the ratio of women to men.

2. Independent variables:

Life expectancy rates at birth (health index): It is the number of years expected to survive assuming the prevailing patterns of death at birth for males and females are constant, and its effect is negative on the economic empowerment of women.

- The ratio of female enrollment in secondary education to males (education indicator): is the number of students enrolled in the last grade of secondary school for females per year divided by the total population of secondary school age and multiplied by 100, and its effect is direct on the economic empowerment of women.
- Total fertility rate: It is the average number of children that a woman can have during her normal reproductive period, and it has an adverse effect on the economic empowerment of women.

Average per capita income: The per capita GDP index was chosen according to the purchasing value (which is an estimate developed by the international price comparison project) to reflect the state of progress in economic growth and income here is treated as an expression of the satisfaction that is derived from the group of basic goods and services. The gross domestic product represents per capita income and the correlation between per capita income and the economic empowerment of women increases. The higher the income of women, the greater their productivity through education and health, thus increasing their economic empowerment.

Implementing the Proposed Model for a Sample of Arab Countries for the Period (2000-2018)

The model was applied to a sample of Arab countries, namely (Iraq, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the Arab Republic of Egypt and Algeria) using the statistical analysis model for the equation of the economic empowerment of women and in the usual small squares method to show the most important determinants of the economic empowerment of women. 1) The following:

Table 1 Results of estimating the equation for the economic empowerment of women by (S.L. O) method in the sample countries during the period 2000-2018/

Iraq

ECO	a0	HE	EDU	FE	GDP	F	R2	D.W
	3.17 (1.51)	0.0357 (0.54)	- 0.173 (1.53)	0.126 (-1.20)	- 0.173 (-2.33)	60.2	40.9	1.21

Qatar

ECO	a0	HE	EDU	FE	GDP	F	R2	D.W
	2.49 (1.52)	- 0.0152 (2.23)	0.531 (1.66)	0.0437 (0.85)	- 0.212 (1.13)	55.1	44.3	2.13

KSA

ECO	a0	HE	EDU	FE	GDP	F	R2	D.W
	87.3 (5.80)	0.0311 (3.41)	- 0.343 (- 1.59)	- 0.0116 (- 0.13)	- 0.352 (2.12)	33.6	54.3	2.12

JORDAN

ECO	a0	HE	EDU	FE	GDP	F	R2	D.W
	- 7.621 (3.81)	0.0521 (-1.54)	0.255 (3.00)	0.313 (-2.22)	- 0.582 (1.54)	49.2	58.0	1.50

EGYPT

ECO	a0	HE	EDU	FE	GDP	F	R2	D.W
	2.321 (0.31)	- 0.0254 (-2.21)	0.832 (-1.52)	-0.0314 (- 1.59)	- 0.189 (1.53)	23.1	35.9	1.21

Algeria

ECO	a0	HE	EDU	FE	GDP	F	R2	D.W
	56.581 (0.45)	- 0.01864 (-2.16)	0.926 (0.69)	0.221 (- 2.11)	- 0.173 (0.23)	12.61	48.9	1.52

Table (1) shows the equation of the determinants of economic empowerment of women by applying the method (OLS) for the period 2000-2018 until the effect of life expectancy at birth for females (HE health index) is significantly positive for the economic empowerment of women at a significant level of 5% in Qatar and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. These are among the oil-producing countries that have witnessed stabilization in economic growth rates, and they are the high-income countries that have made improvements to the health empowerment of women, which positively affected the economic empowerment of women, as well as the effect of life expectancy at birth for females on the economic empowerment of women negatively in Jordan and Egypt, Algeria, and the back of the immoral in Iraq.

The estimates presented in Table (1) also showed that the effect of the ratio of female enrollment in secondary education to males (EDU education index) was positively evident at a significant level of 5% in Jordan, Qatar, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, because the education of women in these countries plays a fundamental role. In increasing the rates of growth and economic development by raising the efficiency and productivity of the human element. Estimates also show that the percentage of female enrollment in secondary education to males appeared negative in Egypt, and non-moral appeared in Algeria.

The estimates presented in Table (1) indicate that the fertility rate (FE) appeared negative at a significant level of 5% in Egypt, Algeria and Jordan, and this is consistent with the text of economic theory, that is, the higher the fertility rate, the lower the economic empowerment of women, and despite its lack of significance, the sign appeared negative In Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

The effect was not significant in Qatar.

The estimates also showed that the effect of the gross domestic product (GDP) was significant and positive on the economic empowerment of women at a level of 5% in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt. For women. The results also show that the impact of the GDP on the economic empowerment of women is negative in Iraq, and positive is not significant in Qatar and Algeria.

The estimates presented in Table 1 also indicate that the independent variables used in the model explain 40.9% of the changes in the determinants of economic empowerment of women in Iraq, 44.3% in Qatar, 54.3% in Saudi Arabia, 58.0% in Jordan and 35.9% in Egypt and 48.9% in Algeria. This means that there is a small percentage of changes that occur in the determinants of women's economic empowerment. These independent

variables cannot be explained. We can refer some of them to political instability, fluctuations in weather conditions, deterioration in the rates of trade exchange and the restrictions imposed by them. Some Arab countries. These variables were not possible for the researcher to study and include them in the estimated model due to the lack of necessary data on them.

Results

The research included analyzing the determinants that affect the economic empowerment of women in the research sample countries, and through the descriptive and standard analytical study, the research reached the most important conclusions that are summarized as follows:

1. This study developed a standard model for estimating the determinants of the cumulative economic empowerment of women in a group of Arab countries.
2. The effect of life expectancy at birth for females (health indicator) is positively positive on the economic empowerment of women at a significant level of 5% in Qatar and Saudi Arabia, as well as the effect of life expectancy at birth for females on the economic empowerment of women (health index) has been negatively evident in Jordan and Egypt, And Algeria, and an immoral back appeared in Iraq.
3. The estimates presented in Table (1) also showed that the effect of the percentage of female enrollment in secondary education to males (education index) appeared positively at a significant level of 5% in Jordan, Qatar, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, as the estimates show that the rate of female enrollment With secondary education to males, a moral negative emerged in Egypt, and an immoral person appeared in Algeria.
4. The estimates presented in Table (1) also indicate that the fertility rate (FE) appeared negative at a significant level of 5% in Egypt, Algeria and Jordan, and this is consistent with the operative of economic theory, that is, the higher the fertility rate, the lower the economic empowerment of women, despite its lack of significance. The sign appeared negative in Iraq and Saudi Arabia, and the effect was not significant in Qatar.
5. The estimates also showed that the effect of gross domestic product (GDP) was significant and positive on the economic empowerment of women at a level of 5% in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt, and this is consistent with the language of economic theory, that is, whenever the size of the gross domestic product represented by raising growth rates will lead to Improvement in women's economic empowerment. The results also show that the impact of the GDP on the economic empowerment of women is negative in Iraq, and positive is not significant in Qatar and Algeria.

Recommendations

Raising the economic participation rate of Arab women, to approach the global average, requires many policies and measures, which are:

1. Providing an attractive environment for women's work, as it is important to amend labor laws and legislations to include an explicit provision forbidding discrimination between males and females in remuneration for similar work, reconsidering discriminatory provisions in the service system regarding bonuses, and ensuring the application of the provisions contained in the labor law which Facilitate women's access to part-time work, guarantee them access to incubators, ensure paid maternity leave, and criminalize gender discrimination in the work environment.
2. Reconsidering the educational system in order to open the way for females to train in various professions in vocational training institutions, and not to limit their training to traditional professions, and to close university majors that do not have jobs in order to help bridge the gap between the high levels of female education and the low The size of their economic participation.
3. A transportation network must be provided at a reasonable economic cost in order to facilitate the movement of human capital in order to ensure the flow of workers and workers in the economy.
4. At the local level, the largest amount of resources and efforts should be directed towards supporting any women's development projects that lack local markets, and that can be financed through micro-financing institutions.

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